

PLAIN TALKS

November

Volume 70

Number 7

1997

Gulf States frequent fliers



**Operators tune in
when phones go out**

**New opportunities
for Spindletop caverns**

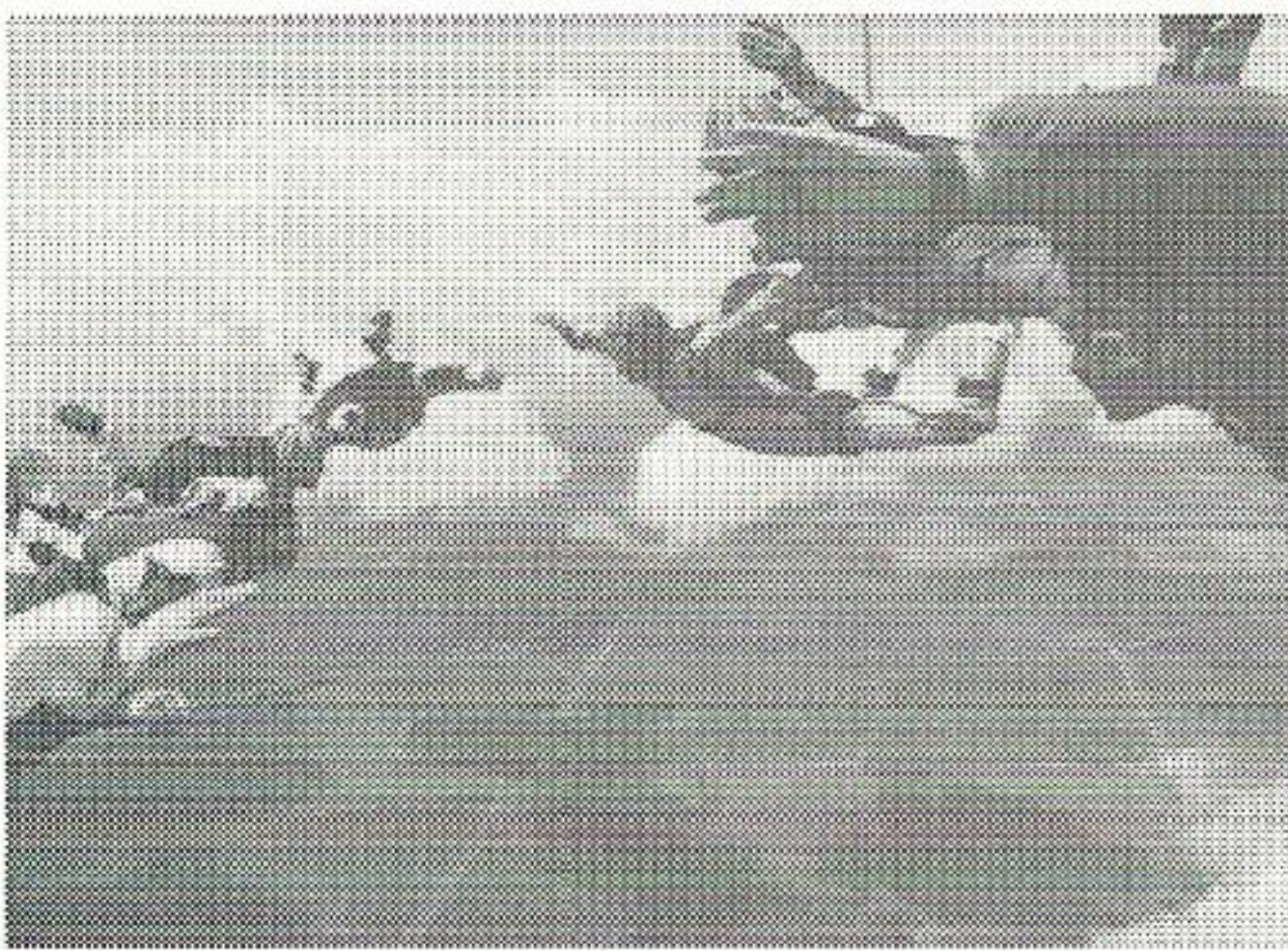
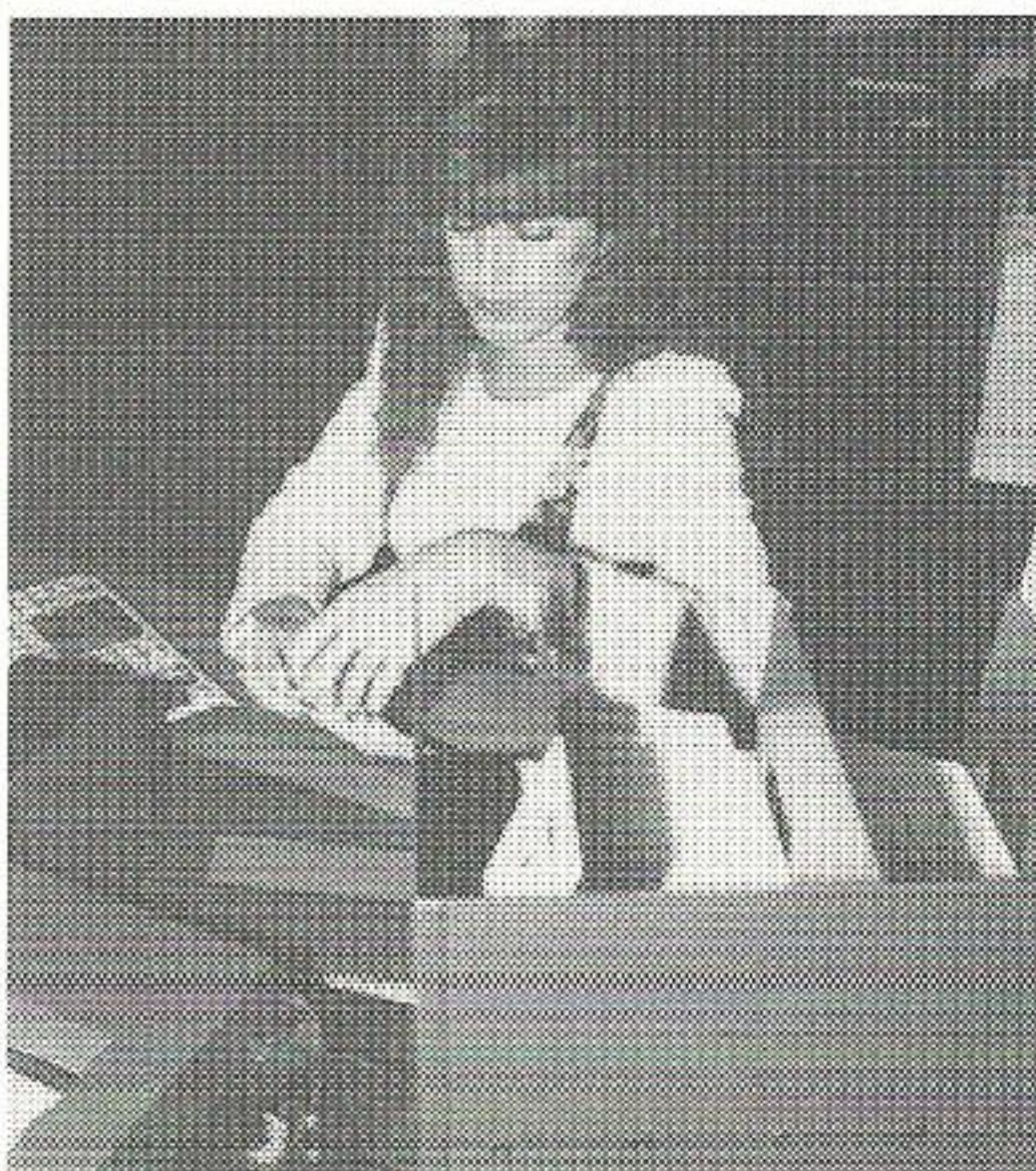
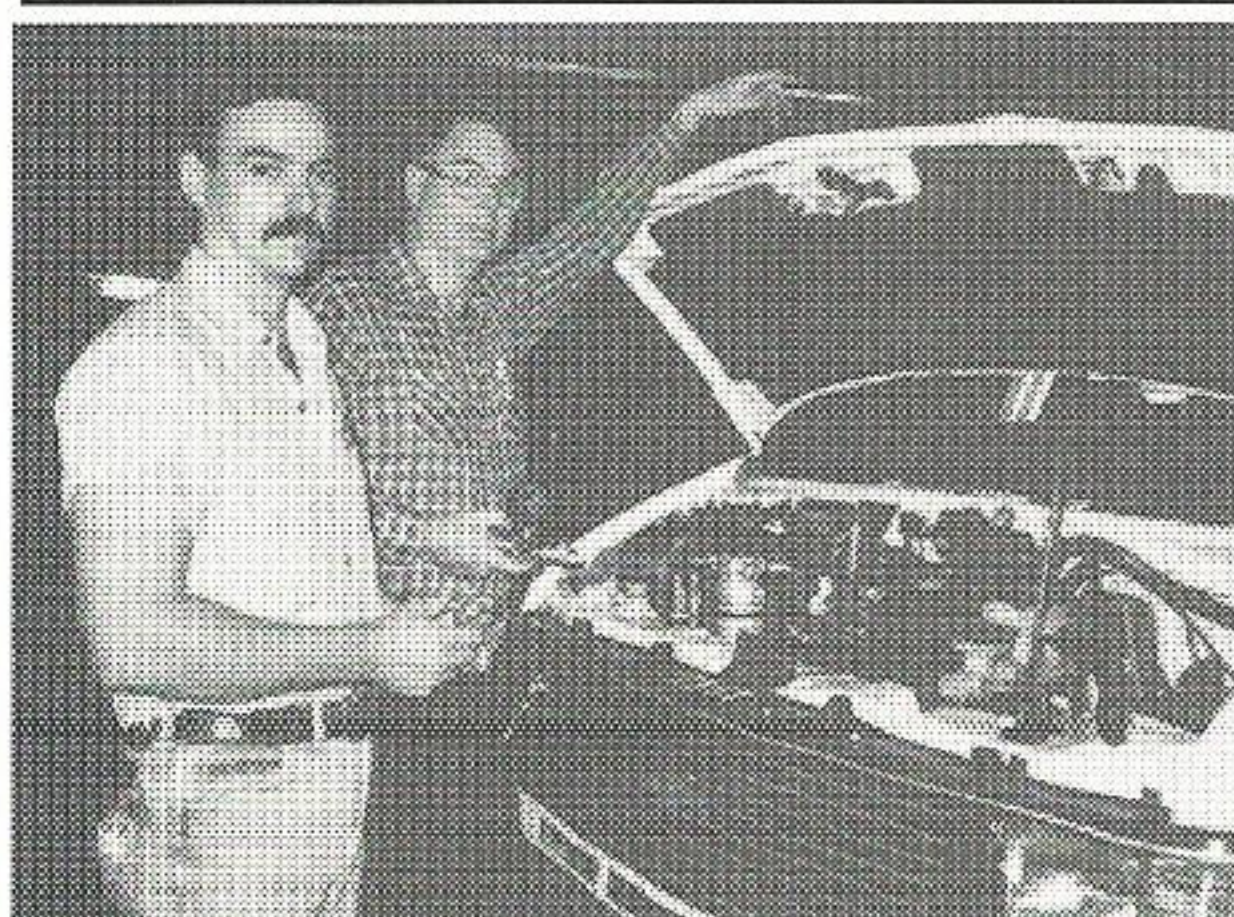
**Homecoming for
Baton Rouge Bird**

PLAIN TALKS

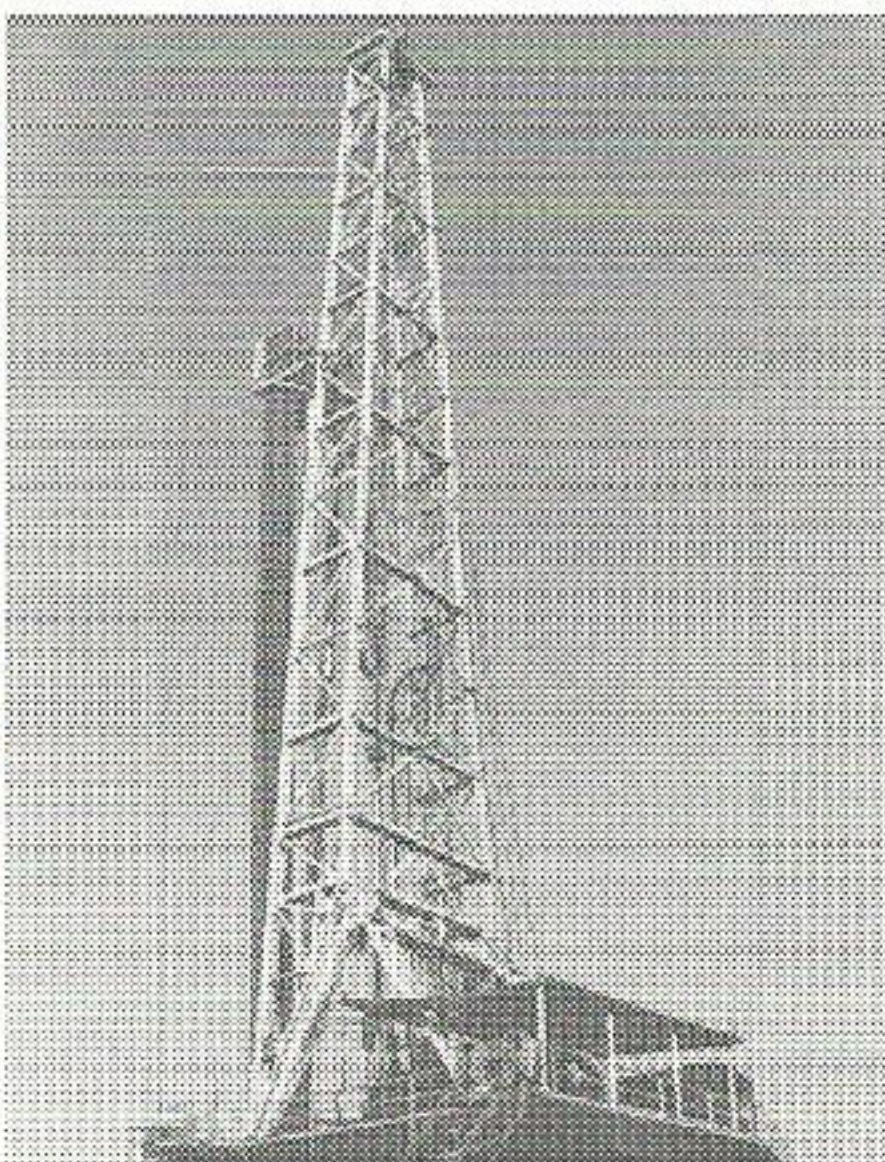
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Employees jump for joy

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About the cover

Scott Latinis, supervisor-application systems, Beaumont, and Chris Fuselier, computer operations associate, Beaumont, take a bird's eye view of the countryside. For more on employee skydivers, see pages 8-9. Photo by Charles Bordelon.



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Manager-Corporate Communications:
Kim McMurray

Executive Editor:
Betty Gavora

Editor:
Scott Harper

Correspondents:

Robert Adams
Vickie Albert
Michael Allen
Laurie Bayern
Ronnie Bordelon
Mamie Burrell
Lisa Creekbaum
Betty Dickschat
Cherie Ducote
Sharon Englade
Pris Gallagher
Charlotte Gautreau
Susan Gilley
Rhonda Haskins
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Employees who change residences or offices should fill out company mailing-address-forms (GSU0012-00-81) and return them to the mailroom in Edison Plaza. GSU publications, departmental mailings and other company information are not automatically forwarded; addresses must be corrected when employees move.

Fill 'er up please ... with natural gas

story and photos by Pris Gallagher

Compressed natural gas (CNG) as an automobile fuel is touted by some as a way to help reduce pollution and clean up the environment, a way to control smog and help the ozone layer. It can also be a way to increase company revenues.

"It's a two-fold benefit to the company," says Tom McBryde, gas department superintendent. "For every equivalent gallon of CNG sold, we sell one kilowatt-hour of electricity to compress the gas."

CNG can be used in almost any vehicle with the addition of a conversion kit and a fuel tank, an investment of between \$1,500 and \$2,000. The tank and kit can be removed when the vehicle is sold or traded and installed on a new vehicle, making it a one-time investment.

The Baton Rouge Water Company recently converted its fleet cars to use CNG. The East Baton Rouge School Board has studied the feasibility and the state of Louisiana is also considering using CNG to fuel their fleet cars.

Gas Department employees have been driving fleet cars and trucks powered by CNG since 1983. Bumper stickers proudly proclaim, "This vehicle powered by clean, efficient natural gas."

Employees in the Choctaw garage have been busy reinstalling the kits on each new service truck issued to the gas department.

"We remove the conversion equipment from the old vehicle and put it in the new vehicle," says Ray Jarreau, garage mechanic, who, with Brad King, garage mechanic-1st class, is installing the necessary equipment.

They were recently installing a conversion kit for a new van. It included a fiberglass-covered aluminum tank, designed to hold the equivalent of 7 1/4 gallons of gasoline, with a range of about 120 miles, depending on the miles per gallon of the vehicle.

This tank is 45 per cent lighter than the steel tanks used in the past, which should improve the fuel efficiency and allow the van to be driven for more miles between refueling.

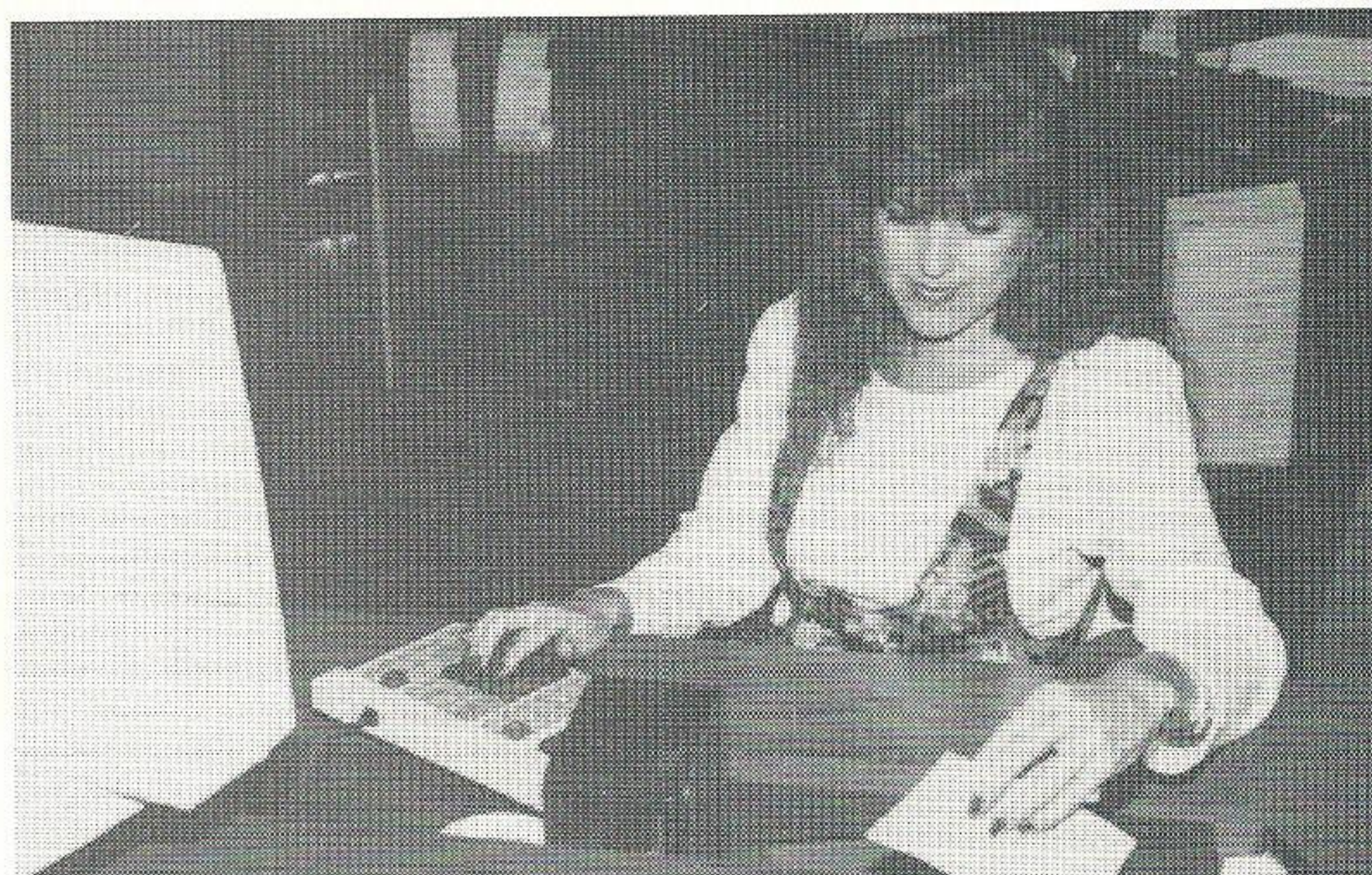
The vehicles are dual-fueled, that is, a switch allows the driver to convert from natural gas to gasoline should the tank become empty, eliminating the problem of no public pay stations for CNG, which critics say is the main disadvantage to CNG-fueled vehicles.

CNG is cleaner-burning, allowing more miles to be driven between oil changes and the cost of the fuel is about half that of gasoline. With these advantages, we should see more interest in CNG-powered vehicles in the near future.



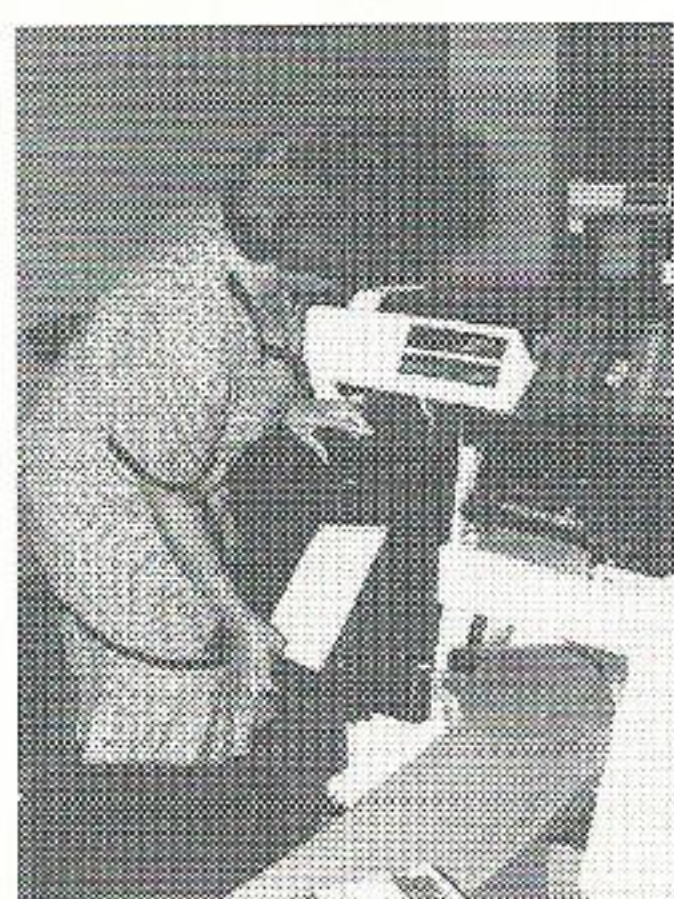
Top, L to R, Brad King, Ray Jarreau and Tom McBryde with the fuel tank that holds CNG. Above, Lloyd Warren, serviceman-gas department, checks out the fill procedure on a CNG-powered vehicle.

New equipment improves speed and accuracy



Pamela Schopp, clerk, keys in check amounts on the new Banc-Tec machines.

**story and photos by
Scott Harper**



Ava Hamilton, clerk, loads a new batch of bills onto the Eagle I opener.

When Payment Processing learned that, after July 1991, IBM would no longer service the 3762 model processing machines used by Gulf States since 1979, it was obvious something had to be done.

"After we heard about IBM's plans to discontinue service, we started looking around to see what was available," says Jim Dowies, supervisor-payment processing, Beaumont.

A committee, made up of Dowies; Butch Franklin, director-division accounting, Beaumont; and Mike Yennie, staff systems analyst, Beaumont, began developing specifications for new processing equipment. "We started actively looking in April of 1990," says Yennie.

The equipment used by Payment Processing takes a bill stub, reads the scan line on the bottom (which includes account number, total bill amount due and balance), then reads the scan line on the bottom of the customer's check and makes sure the amount of the check (keyed in by the operator) corresponds with the bill.

The committee looked at going outside the company for the service, however, it was determined to be more beneficial to keep the service in-house. After much research and a few trips to view the equipment in action, the committee decided on the Banc-Tec processing machine. Some of the companies using the same equipment include The Southern California Gas Company and The Los Angeles Times.

"This is state-of-the-art equipment. It's much faster and more flexible," says Yennie. "It will process as fast as the

operators can go."

According to Dowies, an operator was able to process 800-850 stubs per hour on the old equipment. With the new machines, operators average 1000-1200 stubs per hour. In addition, only four new units were brought in to replace eight existing ones. "We've increased productivity dramatically with the new equipment," says Franklin.

Jackie Hughes, section head, says operators are happy with the equipment. "It's working fine," she says. "One of the positive aspects of the new machines is, if there is an error, it's a lot easier to rectify because of the documentation tape that accompanies the bank tape."

Another feature included with the new processing machines is an accompanying unit called the Eagle I opener. "Under the old system, the bills were opened in the mail room before they were batched and sent to us," says Dowies. "Now the bills are opened directly at the work station."

"It allows more work to be brought straight to the work station and bypasses a couple of stages," adds Yennie. "The bills are handled one time now instead of three."

Another advantage of the new system is the in-house maintenance agreement with Banc-Tec. "It worked out great for us," says Dowies. "These machines do require a lot of maintenance and Banc-Tec located their area maintenance person right here in our office."

"There's no doubt about it," concludes Franklin. "The payback on the machines will be pretty fast. Things are much more economical with the new equipment."

Safety sets sights on lowering accidents

by Scott Harper

Gulf States' employees are taking aim at reducing accidents with "Target Zero," a safety promotion designed to lower the number of electrical-type accidents.

"We had a number of frightening experiences last year," recalls Mike Durham, manager-safety, Beaumont. "Some near accidents could have been fatal. That's why we decided to focus on electrical accidents."

According to Durham, there are two types of electrical accidents: direct contact and flashes. Contacts are when employees are actually shocked. Flashes occur when something short circuits in near proximity. In an electrical flash, an employee could be engulfed in a ball of fire.

"Target Zero' addresses the highest exposure area we have," says Durham. "However, we're not forgetting about other types of accidents."

The program outline for "Target Zero" includes field visits by management; more emphasis on weekly safety meetings; contests and competition; and a new recognition vehicle call "The Safety Patriots."

The program kicked off in April and started with ten drawings for \$300 weekend getaway packages. All employees who had no accident in 1990 were eligible. Joe Reine, substation mechanic-1st class, Baton Rouge, was one of the lucky winners. "I had no idea what they were doing when they drew my name at the safety meeting," remembers Reine. "They had to repeat it a few times."

"I took advantage of the money and applied it to my vacation at Gulf Shores, Ala. We had a wonderful trip. Thanks to the extra money, we were able to do some things we normally wouldn't get to do like riding jet skis," he says.

Individuals and small groups who make significant contributions to safety in company operations are being recognized as Safety Patriots. Those recognized receive a golf cap with the Safety Patriots' logo and a certificate of recognition. Several winners had this to say about the Safety Patriots program and being selected:

"This is a great way to recognize people working safely," says Patriot Joe Simpson, planning coordinator, Beaumont, who received his award for teaching Defensive Driving courses. "I appreciate the recognition, but I'm just doing something I believe in."

Port Arthur Patriot James Gordon, collector, found factory jumpers behind a meter block which allowed electricity to keep running when it should be off. "An employee could have come by thinking the box was dead and got injured," says Gordon. "I felt very privileged to be recognized." Lafayette employees Paul Granger, shop foreman-garage; Tom Broussard, relay foreman; and Warren Hebert, utility man, were all named Safety Patriots for their CPR work in the community of Duson, La. "I think once you've recognized



Target Zero banners help to keep employees like Mike Rachal (l) and James Hignett (r) safety conscious.

people for what they've done, you've given an incentive for others to take a look at what they can do to promote safety," says Granger of the program.

James Hignett, serviceman-1st class, Conroe, is one of several Safety Patriots in Western Division. "I got mine for being on the safety committee," he says.

Hignett and the committee recommend other employees for Patriot recognition like Mike Rachal, utility man, Conroe. Rachal discovered a problem with hoses on hydraulic equipment used in the field. "I tested the hoses and found they had too low a pressure rating for the equipment," says Rachal.

"If Mike hadn't found the problem with the pressure hose, it might have caused a serious accident," says Hignett. "That's why he became a Safety Patriot." Patriot Rachal believes the program is a good idea. "It's an incentive to lookout for safety," he says.

Target Zero appears to be reaching its goal of safety awareness. "If everyone is thinking safety, you'll be safer working as a team," says Wayne Barnett, T&D safety representative, Port Arthur. "The emphasis on weekly safety meetings is good."

"We've had a real good year," says Mike Case, production safety representative, Baton Rouge. "I attribute it to Target Zero. Any program with a reward will help keep safety on your mind."

"It's been well received," says Gene Russell, production safety representative, Sabine Station. "The 'Target Zero' idea keeps safety in front of employees."

Durham believes the program is successful. "Since its implementation, we've had very good success in preventing electrical-type accidents," he says. "From the figures, it's proven to be effective."

"Everyone wants to work safely," concludes Russell. "Safety doesn't come into recognition until someone gets hurt. We want to promote safety before an accident and put it in the minds of employees."



Joe Simpson and Mike Durham
photo by Robert Adams



Steve Gomez, communication serviceman-1st class, disconnects the temporary antenna in preparation for a new 40-foot antenna installation near GSU's Liberty-Pearl building. Edison Plaza is pictured in the background.

"We just need a battery, an antenna and a radio."

Everett Davis

Emergency radios put operators on the air

story and photo by Robert Adams

How can one use a 20-foot section of steel pipe and a glass bottle to talk all across the United States? If you are Communication Services, you use the pipe as a radio antenna and the bottle to insulate it.

That's exactly what they did last November, when they demonstrated a new emergency radio communication system for Gulf States. GSU will use the system to communicate internally and with the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) when normal communications are out of service.

The Southwest Power Pool is a group of 26 electric utilities and other companies, including GSU, formed to provide more reliable service by better planning and coordination of generation and transmission systems.

The radio demonstration culminated an SPP task force organized to find a workable solution to the problem of long-distance communication during emergencies.

Everett Davis, communications planner and GSU's representative on the task force, says they talked with several groups across the country about emergency communications, including victims of Hurricane Hugo and the San Francisco earthquake. "We found out that two-way radios seemed to work the best," he says.

The radios use high frequency signals, similar to amateur radio. The signals are able to "skip" for long distances by bouncing off of the earth's ionosphere. However, the quality of the radio signals is very susceptible to atmospheric conditions and sunspots. Conditions can change hour by hour so finding the best frequency for clear communication can be a challenge.

Davis says recent technological advances enable the use of the radios. "Twenty years ago, we tried something similar," he says, "but the equipment was poor and unreliable. Now, in only a fraction of a second, computer control of the radios lets them automatically choose the best frequency for the clearest signal."

GSU recently bought six of the units. One will remain in the Energy Control Center in Beaumont. It will be used to contact the SPP office in Pine Bluff, Ark. The others will be dispatched during outages in the service territory, such as an area damaged by a hurricane.

Everett says the task force looked at several options for the system, including satellite communication, cellular telephones and microwave signals. All the other systems were rejected for various reasons, including cost and reliability.

He says these radios are extremely reliable. "During the test phase, we took one of the radios out and threw the antenna up into a tree. A moment later, we were talking with the system operator in Beaumont."

The radios will enable operators to communicate with each other and SPP, even if all the power is out or other communication equipment is damaged.

"We just need a battery, an antenna and a radio," says Davis.



Looking like hardware from the Persian Gulf, these filters remove sand during the leaching process, which increases the size of the storage caverns. In the background, a derrick sits atop one of the salt domes.

Spindletop readies for gas storage

story by Susan Gilley
photos by Robert Adams

A construction project at the Spindletop oil field is bringing new life to the historic site of Beaumont's gusher. This time, however, the ground will store fuel instead of spewing it into the air.



John Bernard, engineering analyst and project construction coordinator, Beaumont, checks the pressure drop on one of the filters to keep the brine flowing efficiently.

Construction began in April 1991 on gas storage facilities at the oilfield, said Bill Harrington, GSU's manager-fuel services and project manager for the Spindletop project. The company has entered into a contract with Sabine Gas Transmission Co. of Houston for transportation and swing service. Gulf

States will eventually be able to stockpile up to 10 billion cubic feet of natural gas in caverns created in an old salt dome. When completed, GSU will be better able to cope with swings in consumption at the Sabine Station power plant near Bridge City, Texas.

GSU presently adjusts gas consumption as it matches electric generation to customer consumption, which varies on an hourly, daily and seasonal basis. As a result, fuel buyers sometimes must "swing" fuel purchases on an hourly basis to match customer needs, Harrington explained. The storage facility will save customers money on fuel costs because of pricing advantages associated with steady, uniform usage.

Construction is being carried out in

three stages, with a 1-billion-cubic-foot cavern expected to go into service in August 1992. A second cavern, capable of holding about 5 billion cubic feet of natural gas, will be ready to go into service in August 1994. At that time, the first facility will undergo additional leaching to increase the capacity to 5 bcf. It will be completed around July 1996.

With the discovery of the Lucas gusher in 1901, the Spindletop field was the site of Beaumont's first big boom. "What we're doing with the salt domes today is more like a boomlet. There will be about 200 construction jobs and 12 fulltime permanent jobs with Sabine Gas," Harrington said.



L to R, James Turner, Scott Latinis and friends skydive over the Lake Charles area.

Employees jump for joy

story by Mike Rodgers
photos by Charles Bordelon

Here's the proposition: You have the opportunity to take a small airplane to 10,000 feet or higher, jump out the open door, free-fall for 50-60 seconds at 120 mph, pull a cord and wait until a very thin layer of fabric opens and carries you to the approaching earth below your feet. Most of us would respond to that proposition with a prompt "No thanks."

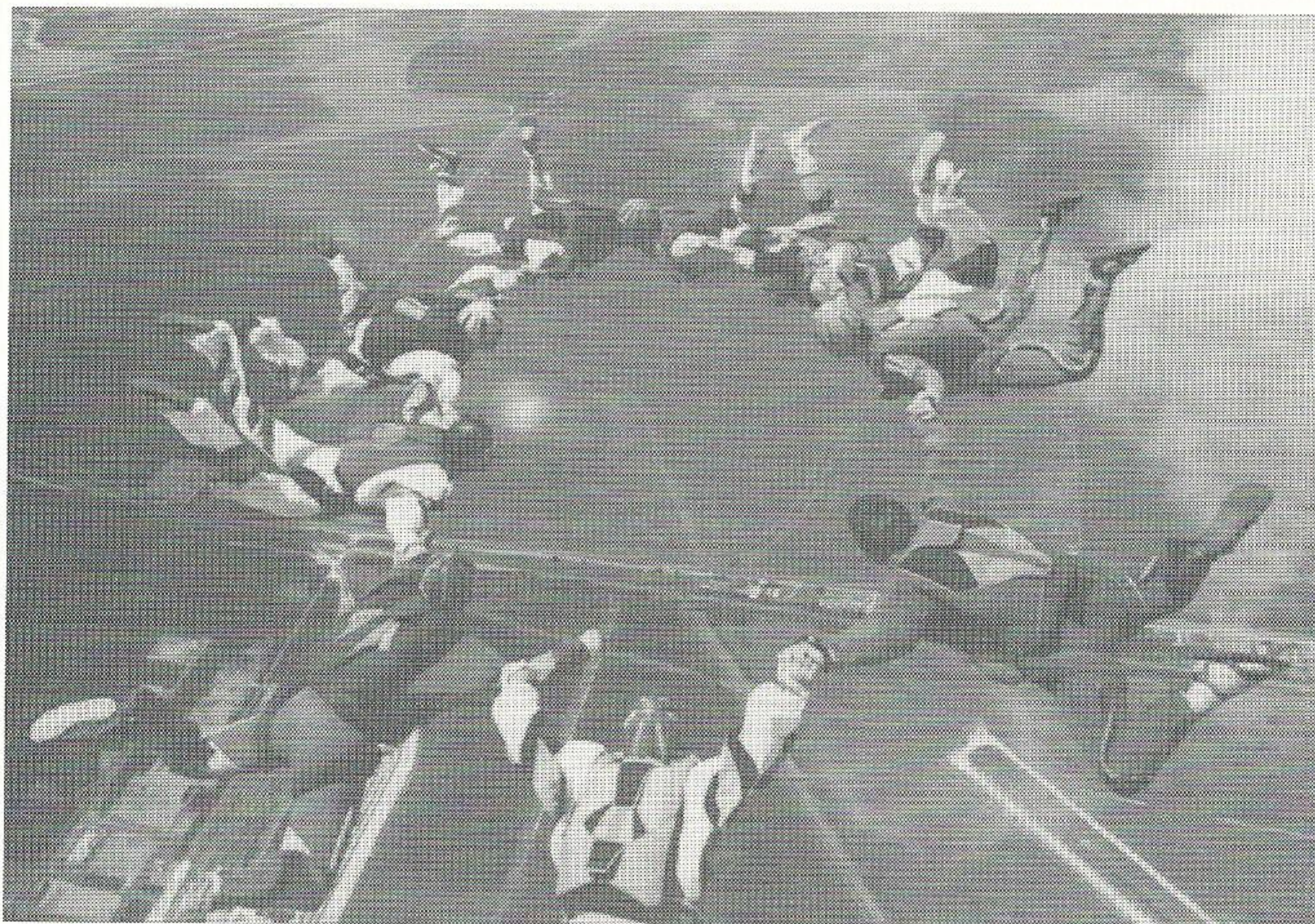
For GSUsers Scott Latinis and James Turner though, the answer is a resounding "Yes!" The two skydivers share an infectious enthusiasm for a sport that makes the rest of us more than a bit nervous to even contemplate, much less actually do.

Turner, supervisor-application systems, Beaumont, is in his 10th year as a skydiver, with 750 registered jumps. To the inevitable question, "Why this?"

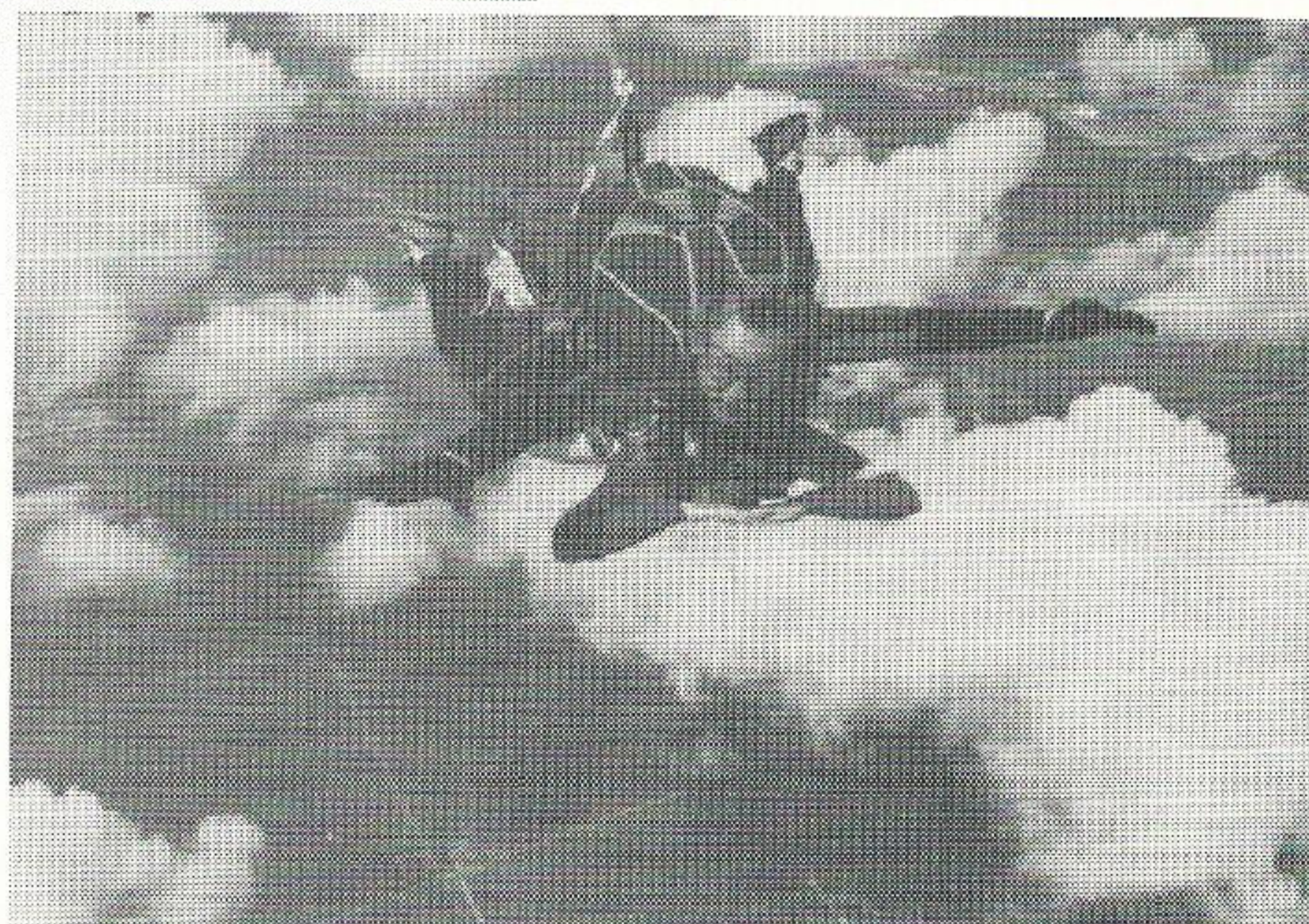
Turner responds, "It's something I've always wanted to do, and Scott helped get me into it." The Scott in this instance is Scott Latinis, also a supervisor-application systems in Beaumont. Latinis counts 11 years as a skydiver with about 1,800 registered jumps to his credit.

Both men agree that the free-fall from the plane before the parachute opens is the real excitement. "It's a rush. I've never found anything like it," says Latinis. Turner describes the beauty of the land below, the peace and the silence as he floats on the air once the chute brakes the free-fall. "Guiding the chute through the silence is like steering the wing of an airplane."

According to Latinis, Skydiving is a much safer sport now than it was some years ago. The new chutes are



Left, Latinis' skydiving group performs "relative work." Bottom left, divers exit the plane. Bottom right, Chris Fuselier, computer operations associate, Beaumont, jumps tandem with Latinis in Beaumont.



square-shaped and much easier to control than the round, military chutes which many of us see in old World War II movies. Those chutes were designed to get paratroopers on the ground as quickly as possible, with landings that could cause injury. Latinis emphasizes that with the modern day versions, landings can be "like stepping off a curb."

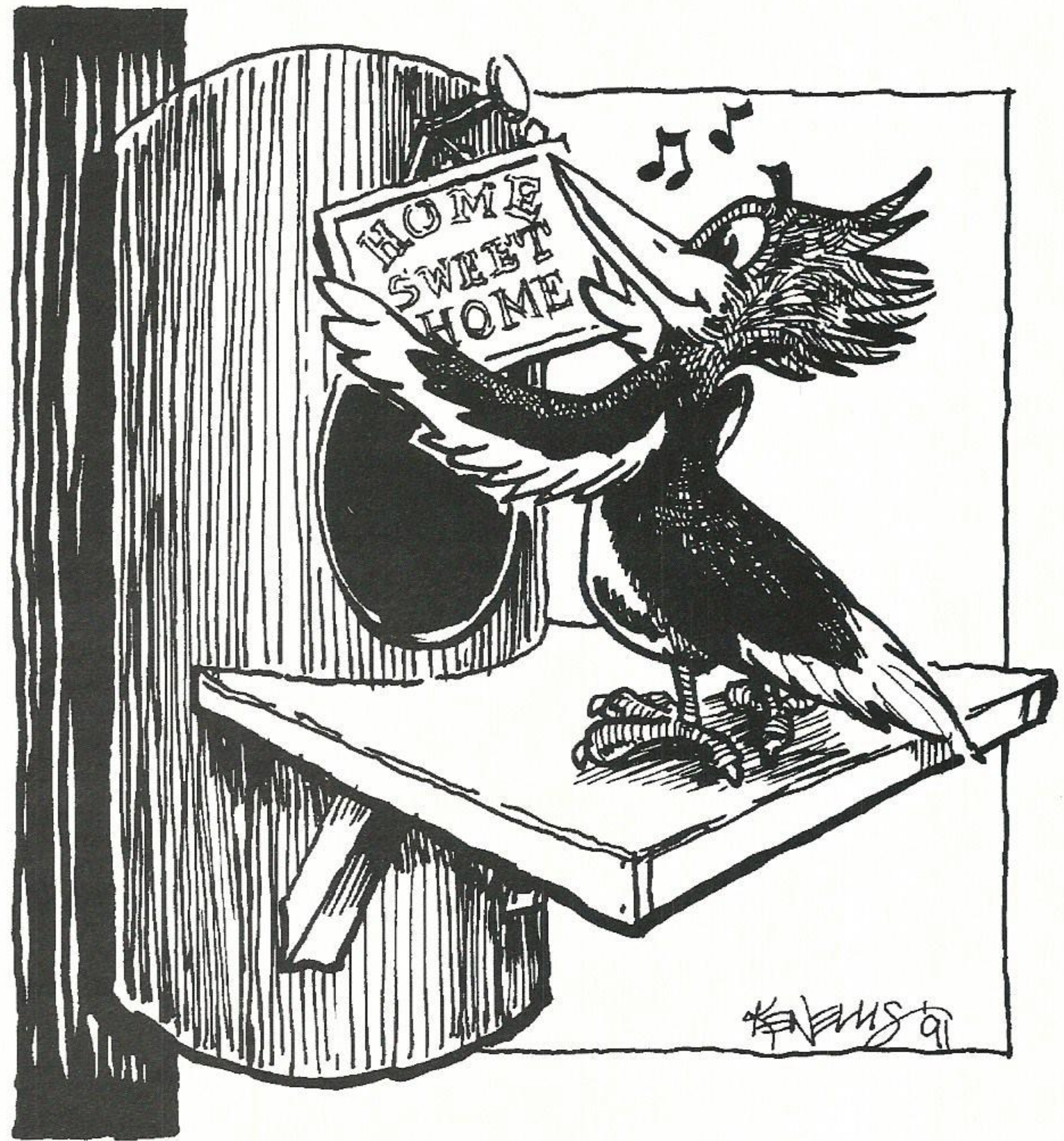
The sport is also closely regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). No one is permitted to jump through a cloud or over a populated area without permission. Skydivers who drop into packed football stadiums must get proper approvals in advance. In addition, all skydivers must carry two parachutes, the main chute and a reserve. The FAA requires that the reserve chute be packed by a "rigger," a person certified to fold and pack them correctly. Turner and Latinis each pack their own main chutes, a procedure that takes five or 10 minutes to complete. Safety is enhanced by a "rip-stop" feature in the nylon fabric. If a rip develops during a drop, the hole cannot get bigger.

Most of us are familiar with those photos of skydivers free-falling arm-in-arm in a circular formation. "That's called 'relative work' by the professionals," says Latinis, who once participated in the largest formation in Texas. It was a flower shape involving 64 skydivers. When the time comes to break away, each skydiver must

move in a different direction so their chutes don't collide. The rate of a skydiver's fall is controlled by spreading arms and legs, bending the chest forward or flying flat.

Probing a bit deeper, you find some other reasons why Turner and Latinis enjoy skydiving. Phrases such as "very relaxing," "stress reliever" and "an addiction" all surface. Skydiving offers participants another unique experience many of us miss. Says Latinis, "While free-falling I can do backflips, rolls, summersaults and all kinds of gymnastics. I can't do any of those on the ground."

Customer service for the birds



story and photo by Pris Gallagher

Call it customer service...call it bird service...call it what you like, but what it adds up to is responding to our customer's needs.

Gene Cosnahan, Baton Rouge customer, routinely observed a pileated woodpecker

nesting on a transmission pole in his subdivision. One morning, upon seeing utility crews changing rotten poles, he became concerned about the woodpecker, especially since he discovered it was on the endangered species list.

A telephone call to Bill

Benedetto, manager-Louisiana communications, resulted in prompt customer service.

Benedetto contacted Rick Arnette, senior engineering assistant, who inspected the work being done and the possible damage to the bird's habitat.

He, in turn, worked with Mike Saucier, utility foreman, who instructed the contractor replacing the poles to skip that particular one until a solution could be found.

Cosnahan then called the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, who offered the solution. Saucier's crews cut off the section of the rotting pole that contained the woodpecker's nests and strapped them to the new poles as they were installed.

The result? A satisfied customer who appreciates the extra effort we took to save his friend's house.



Left to right, Mike Saucier, Rick Arnette, and Donald Hood (supervisor-customer services) listen as Baton Rouge Customer Gene Cosnahan thanks them for the extra effort put forth by Gulf States' crews.

NEWS BRIEFS



Buser and Johnson

Johnson and Buser earn designation

GSU economic development professionals Dolly Johnson and Steve Buser, both of Beaumont, recently earned the Certified Industrial/Economic Developer designation from the American Economic Development Council.

Johnson, economic development-director, and Buser, economic development specialist, are the third and fourth employees to earn the designation. They join Malcolm Williams, manager-business development, who earned the designation in 1972, and Economic Development Specialist Janice Wynn, who obtained the CID/CED in 1986.

"We are extremely proud of these individuals' accomplishments," says Jim Moss, vice president-marketing. "There are only about 500 economic development professionals in the country who have earned the this designation, and having four of them right here is a great benefit to this area in today's competitive economic development climate."

Candidates for the designation must have a minimum of five years experience. The designation is earned by passing rigorous written and oral examinations that test both performance and knowledge in the economic development field.



The Beaumont Sideliners took a 12-day tour in July that included stops in Arizona, Colorado, Amarillo and Fort Worth. The group hit several tourist spots including the Grand Canyon (above). Sideliner Reporter Myrtle Zahn says the group had a great time. "Al Bowen somehow always seems to make each trip better than the one before," she says of the group's tour coordinator.



Dr. Howard Kane was recently in Beaumont to present, "An Evening with Mr. Edison." Dr. Kane, a former science instructor at the Edison Community College in Fort Myers, Fl., began impersonating Edison for his students. He now tours the country teaching people about Edison through his dramatic sketch. Dr. Kane also does a dramatic presentation of Charles Darwin. While in Beaumont, he stopped by the Edison Plaza Museum.

SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

September/October

1991

Service
Anniversaries

40 YEARS

J. R. Cornelius
Engrg. & Tech. Svcs.
Beaumont
Donald Craft
Gas Department
Baton Rouge
Edgar Perkins Jr.
Division Accounting
Beaumont
James B. Flanagan
Electric T&D
Beaumont

30 YEARS

Willis E. Coon
Human Resources
Beaumont
John H. Linder
Plant Production
Louisiana Station
Thomas L. Grant
Power Supply
Beaumont
Clabe C. Tuttle
Plant Production
Sabine Station
Edwin A. Grimshaw
Electric T&D
Lake Charles
Thomas E. Parsley
RBNG Engrg. & Admin.
River Bend

20 YEARS

M. C. Unbehagen Jr.
Plant Production
Louisiana Station
Karen L. Morley
Division Accounting
Huntsville
Charles R. Turnley Jr.
Electric T&D
Baton Rouge
Judge R. Williamson
Plant Production
Nelson Coal

David G. Denby
System Operations
Beaumont
John T. Knoden
Plant Production
Lewis Creek
Conrad E. Starns
Electric T&D
Baton Rouge
Fred W. Augustine
Electric T&D
Beaumont

10 YEARS

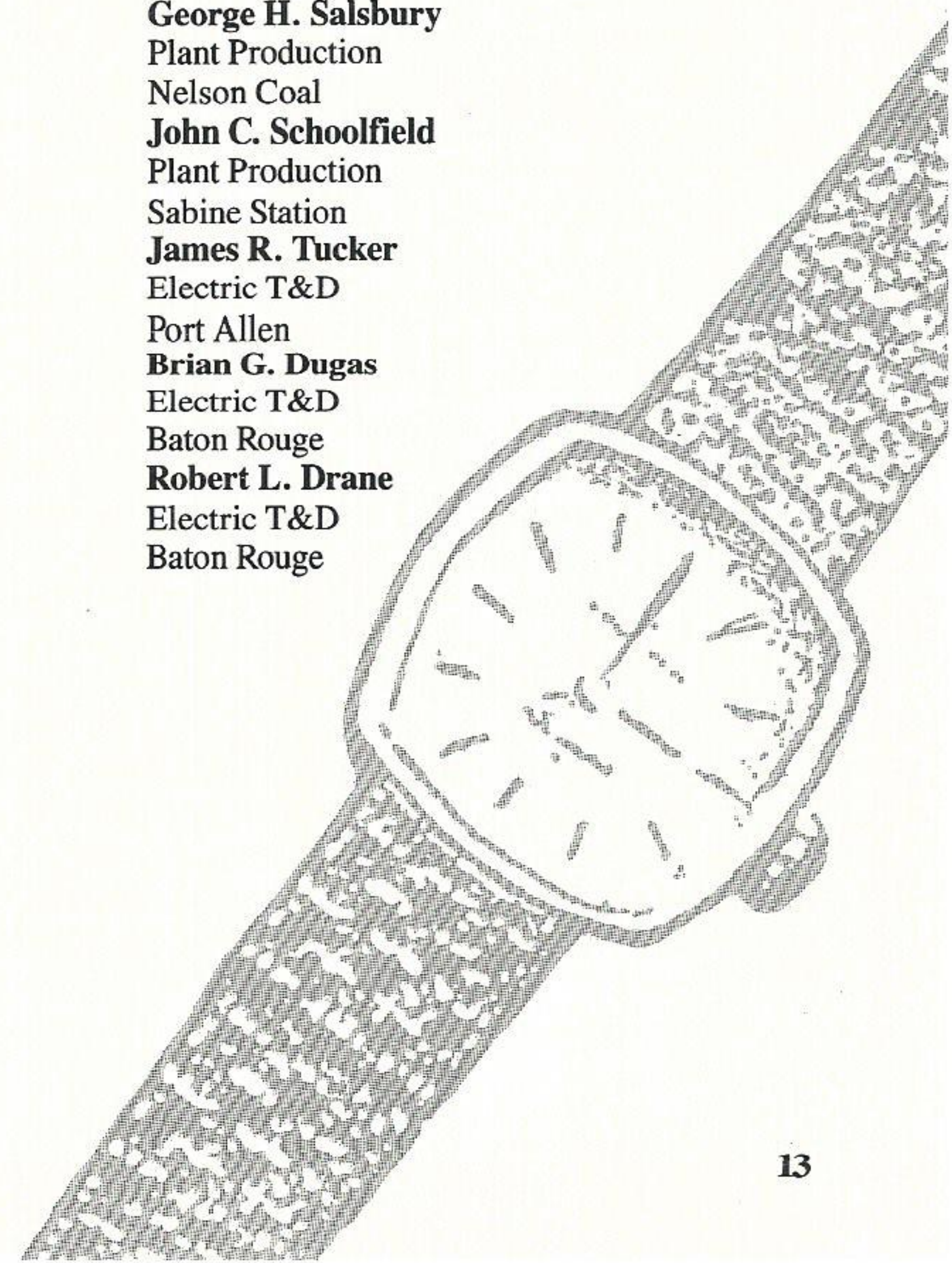
Bonnie L. Burris
Plant Production
Sabine Station
Jay L. Dorrell
Division Accounting
Beaumont
Roger N. Gillespie
Engineering
Beaumont
Brian D. Hamborg
Corporate Planning
Beaumont
Stephen T. Hoffman
Computer Applications
Beaumont
Myra L. Merriman
Accounting Services
Beaumont
Annette H. Wade
Financial Services
Beaumont
Arthur T. Williams
Division Accounting
Sulphur
Maurice A. Albert
Electric T&D
The Woodlands
Marion B. Cross
Engineering Services
Beaumont
Mark A. Montgomery
Electric T&D
Lake Charles
Kenneth D. Johnson
Plant Production
Willow Glen
Charles A. Warren
General Services
Beaumont
Lowell A. Boudreaux
Plant Production
Sabine Station
Melvin A. Grimes
Electric T&D
Beaumont
Ray N. Mason
Engineering Services
Beaumont
Glenn T. Miller
Plant Production
Nelson Coal
Herbert J. Pete
Plant Production
Nelson Coal
Jaye T. Price
Accounting Services
Beaumont
Jenny Rushton
Marketing
Beaumont
David R. Stahl
Plant Production
Nelson Coal
Phyllis R. Thomas
Plant Production
Sabine Station
David W. Trahan
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Lake Charles
Loraine W. Piper
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Ronald A. Ronshak
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Patrick N. Hartner
Gas Department
Baton Rouge
Neal D. Hanna
Gas Department
Baton Rouge
Patricia Cormier
Electric T&D
Lafayette
Elie J. Courville
Plant Production
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Henry L. Frazier
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Lake Charles
Cynthia B. Goodson
Division Accounting
Dayton
Mary E. Hudson
Accounting Services
Beaumont
Yvonne S. Kennedy
Accounting Services
Beaumont



Angeline D. Kroll
Plant Production
Lewis Creek
Larry J. Moore
Plant Production
Nelson Coal
Patrick W. Thibodeaux
Plant Production
Nelson Station
Morris J. Woods
Electric T&D
Lake Charles
James E. Yates
Electric T&D
Beaumont
A. D. Paynes
Plant Production
River Bend
Kenneth R. Tevis
Plant Production
Sabine Station
George R. Collignon
Gas Department
Baton Rouge
Ricky E. Daniels
Electric T&D
Port Arthur
David P. George
Electric T&D
Orange
Edward A. Jones
Electric T&D
Port Arthur
Kenneth W. Smith
Plant Production
Willow Glen
Dale F. Colleps Jr.
Gas Department
Baton Rouge

Samuel E. Adams
Internal Audits
Beaumont
Judy G. Brown
Power Supply
Beaumont
Charles Lagarde Jr.
Gas Department
Baton Rouge
Jeffery P. Allen
Electric T&D
Port Allen
Cinda W. Battles
Electric T&D
Beaumont
Alfin A. Caesar
Plant Production
Nelson Station
Daniel R. Clark
Accounting Services
Beaumont
Gary W. Henry
Plant Production
River Bend
Ricky D. King
Electric T&D
Vidor
James M. Leche
Electric T&D
Baton Rouge
Daron W. Nettles
Electric T&D
Port Arthur
Pearl S. Sonnier
Electric T&D
Lafayette
Mark S. Berteau
Electric T&D
Baton Rouge
James E. Newmister
Plant Production
Nelson Station
David Brawner
Plant Production
Nelson Coal
Teresa M. Caldwell
Computer Applications
Beaumont
Joyce H. Dubose
Fuel Services
Beaumont
Donna E. Floyd
Legal Services
Beaumont
David W. Guilbeau
Electric T&D
Port Arthur
Jesse M. Landry
Plant Production
River Bend
Gregory K. Lintzen
Electric T&D
Lake Charles
Craig A. Mitchell
Plant Production
Willow Glen

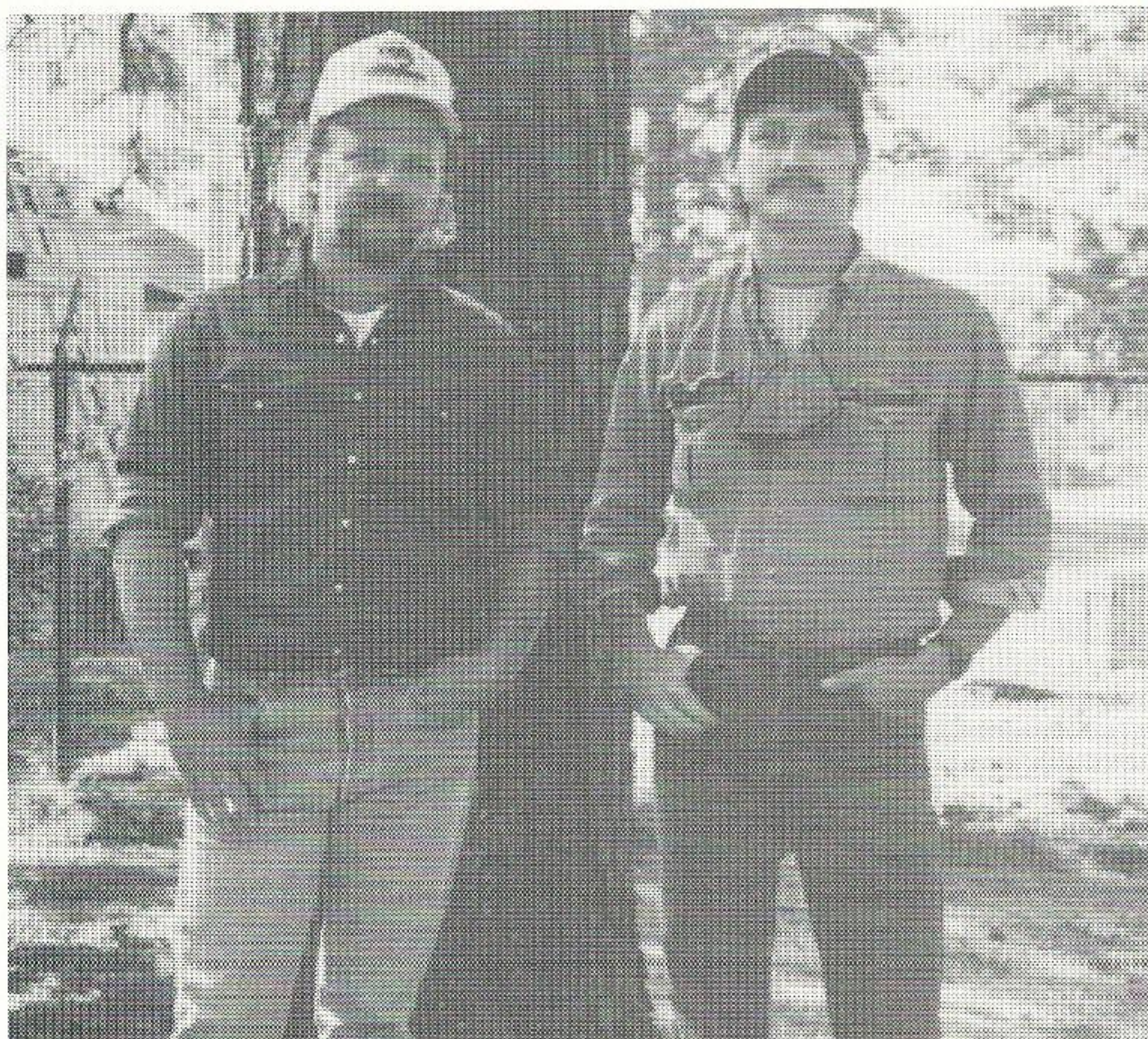
James K. Parker
Plant Production
Nelson Coal
Thomas J. Ray
Electric T&D
Beaumont
Daniel J. Robillard
Plant Production
Louisiana Station
Leslie S. Smith
Plant Production
River Bend
James B. Toniette Jr.
Electric T&D
Lake Charles
Michael G. Webb
Computer Applications
Beaumont
Donald D. Hebert
System Production
Nelson Coal
Melvin J. Hoffpauir
Electric T&D
Lafayette
Terry L. Morris
Plant Production
Lewis Creek
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Plant Production
Sabine Station
James R. Tucker
Electric T&D
Port Allen
Brian G. Dugas
Electric T&D
Baton Rouge
Robert L. Drane
Electric T&D
Baton Rouge



MAILBOX



Audrey McDonald



Swope and Allbritton

Fast response

"I want to thank you for the fast response when I called in the hot fuse box at the Charles Batchelor home," writes Nurse Nancy McLoud to the Orange office. "I am the visiting nurse to that home."

"Uncertain about whether Mrs. Bachelor had conveyed the seriousness of the situation when she phoned, I placed a second call. Your men pulled in the driveway while I was on the phone. I couldn't believe it."

"Mrs. Bachelor told me you stayed at the home until the electrician arrived. What a kind thing for you to do. Thanks from me and the Bachelors."

"Nurses find really dangerous conditions frequently when visiting homes and rarely is the response so fast, thorough and kind as yours. Many, many thanks."

The employees responding to the call were **Mike Swope** and **Wayne Allbritton**, both servicemen-1st class, Orange.

Economic expertise

Calvin Hebert, senior executive vice president-external affairs, Beaumont, received this letter from J.B. Neathery, Sr., real estate, Beaumont, regarding his interactions with **John Tarver**, economic development specialist, Beaumont:

"**Charles Glass** (vice president-operations, Beaumont) introduced me to Mr. John Tarver in your Economic Development Department four years ago...I was not aware...GSU had such an elaborate department. Mr Tarver has worked with me several times and assisted me with information numerous times since our first meeting."

"...I cannot begin to tell you what a tremendous help the... Department and Mr Tarver have been to me. It is a pleasure to work with Mr. Tarver and I welcome the opportunity to elaborate on the expertise GSU offers...Mr. Tarver is a fine, young man and a knowledgeable professional in his field."

Hospitality appreciated

Joe Haney, Lake Charles Carbon, Lake Charles, sent this letter to **Ed Brawner**, industrial representative, Lake Charles, in appreciation of dedicated service:

"We at Lake Charles Carbon want to thank you and the entire team at GSU for the hospitality afforded us...After meeting with your team, it is easy to understand the quality service that we receive from GSU. The dedication and professionalism demonstrated by your people is reflected in your service to us."

Kid Safe success

Les Jones, customer information coordinator, Beaumont, received this note from Paula Teague and Sylvia Colvin, education department, Baptist Healthcare Organization, Beaumont.:

"We just wanted to thank you and the 'GSU crew' for helping us make Kid Safe such a success. We appreciate you!"

Heavenly support

Sulphur Customer Donna Duberville, who also works for the *Southwest Daily News*, sent this thank-you note to the Lake Charles office:

"On Sunday, Aug. 18, a GSU crew worked on lines near my church (First Baptist-Sulphur) while the lines were hot, so our power would not be disrupted during the service. Our pastor offered a prayer of thanksgiving for those men during the service. You can't buy that kind of PR. Thought you'd like to know."

The Lake Charles crew consisted of **R.W. Williams**, utility foreman, **B.G. Gillard**, lineman-1st class, **J.B. Soileau**, lineman-1st class, and **F. LeBaron**, apprentice.

Safe and professional

"I would like to make you aware of an outstanding job done by one of your employees, **Van Addison**," writes Baton Rouge customers John and Elaine Bauman to **Buddy Humphrey**, service foreman, Baton Rouge.

"...we discovered that a large tree limb from my neighbor's tree had fallen across our service entrance wiring. Not wanting to try to remove the limb while the service was hot, I contacted GSU...Mr. Addison took the call. He was most appreciative of our situation and explained that he would have someone come out within the hour."

"That someone was himself...he proceeded to remove the limb without damage to shrubbery or fencing...While this may sound fairly simple, there was not only potential for property damage, but for personal injury as well. Working at Exxon Chemical, I have a real appreciation for safety and people working safely. Mr. Addison took all the right precautions and completed the job in a safe and professional manner."

"...Mr. Addison is a credit to GSU, his profession and the community."

Addison is serviceman-1st class in Baton Rouge.

Help and concern

Connie Calfee, customer information coordinator, Conroe, received this thank-you letter from Lori Wina, Conroe customer:

"I want to thank you for your help and concern. Without it, I really don't know how I would have paid my bill this month. I am truly trying so hard to make ends meet. Thank you and bless you."

A job that *would* be a laughing matter

MEMORANDUM

TO: Lee Miller
Vice President-Human Resources
FROM: Kim McMurray
Manager-Corporate Communications



Recognizing all the steps we have taken in recent years to reduce and control staffing, I am writing to propose creation of a new position that I believe is badly needed as GSU slowly gets back on its financial feet. GSU needs a Manager of Corporate Humor.

During the last five or six years, many GSU employees have forgotten how to laugh. Every time we turned around, some regulator or judge or intervenor group seemed to be kicking us in the teeth. Happy days definitely were not here.

We're certainly not out of the woods yet, but it now seems less likely that the light we see at the end of the tunnel is an oncoming train. My concern is that, when more normal times do arrive, our corporate sense of humor will not be in a state of readiness. We need a Manager of Corporate Humor to make sure that, when it's time to start really laughing, we'll be prepared.

As you might suspect, I have a few suggestions about what the Manager of Corporate Humor would do. Ideally, of course, we'd like for everyone to erupt into riotous laughter the minute he started work. But, as David Beekman and Herb Stein and Clyde McBride can testify (and often do), such things take time. What this individual would do first is to come up with a humor phase-in plan.

In the first year, he might try to get employees to grin. In year two, he might try for giggles, followed by chuckles in year three and real belly-laughs in year four.

What programs can be implemented to make this phase-in plan work? For one thing, we could compile outrageously funny stories about various occupations found throughout the company. Who could resist a book of the best jokes about accountants, engineers and computer programmers? (It certainly wouldn't take long to read.)

I can envision a series of video reports for employees.

One, a soap opera about some of the regulatory treatment we've gotten through the years, could be called "LA Law," with the LA standing for Louisiana.

Considering how some regulators try to manage the day-to-day activities of the company, another show could be called "Who's the Boss?"

The \$1.4 billion that has been excluded from rate base in both states could be the subject of both "The Price Is Right" (for customers) and "Jeopardy" (for shareholders).

The Manager of Corporate Humor also would put out a regular report similar to Mike Durham's safety bulletin. It would include funny things that happen to employees on the job.

The Nov. 7, 1988, issue of **Newsbreaker** reported a few such episodes:

- Debbie Morrison, who at the time was Beaumont Division supervisor-customer services, told about the time she was playing Louie the Lightning Bug when a young boy punched her in the stomach and told her she couldn't be a bug because "You ain't got no hair on your legs."

- Sherry Overbeck recounted the time when, as a district service representative checking out a high bill complaint in The Woodlands, a customer was convinced there were people living in his attic stealing his electricity.

- I once heard—with my own ears—a customer say she was doing her part to conserve energy: "I don't play my radio nearly as loud as I used to," she boasted.

- And then there's the story I heard about an elderly lady who called in and wanted to be put on the "day rate." Investigation revealed that her power went off every morning at dawn and came on at dusk because someone had hooked up the service in her home to the street light in front of the house. (I hope this is a true story. If anyone can verify it, please let me know.)

Lee, I realize the Attrition Management Committee may not approve this new position right away. So, on second thought, I've decided to bypass the committee and send the position requisition for this new job directly to Dr. Draper. Hope you don't mind.*

* That's a joke, Lee. Are you laughing?

PLAIN TALKS

P.O. Box 2951
Beaumont, Texas 77704

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Left to right, Joe Brecht of Kirbyville, GSU's Scott Latinis (dark suit) and Robert Bertrand of Lake Charles perform a relative work formation known as "The Star" over Beaumont Municipal Airport. Photo by Charles Bordelon.



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